

CLAIMS

1. A method for establishing and maintaining a categorized Web browsing history, comprising the steps of:

5 using a directory service to get category metadata about user visited URLs;
and

 using metadata thus obtained to present a user's personal browser history in a category based hierarchy.

10 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said directory service comprises the Open Directory Project.

 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein said directory service comprises a database, that exposes a Web interface, and that allows navigating through categories to find Web
15 sites.

 4. The method of Claim 3, wherein said categories are structured as trees, where each node of a tree has zero or one parents and zero or many children.

20 5. A method for establishing and maintaining a categorized Web browsing history, comprising the steps of:

 performing a reverse lookup in a database to find a chain of categories for a URL, every time a URL that has not been previously seen is added to a history; and

 for URLs for which there is no category in said database, iteratively retrying
25 said reverse lookup using a less specific part of said URL until a category is found;

6. The method of Claim 5, further comprising the step of:

using standard relational database technology to store and query a local representation of said categories.

5 7. The method of Claim 6, further comprising the step of:

using a row in a first database table for each category node, wherein each row has a parent field to represent a node in a category chain.

8. The method of Claim 7, further comprising the step of:

10 using a second database table to store a relationship between each URL and its one specific category node.

9. The method of Claim 8, further comprising the steps of:

15 given a category path, adding rows for any nodes that are not already in said local database; and
setting parent links appropriately.

10. The method of Claim 9, further comprising the step of:

20 using standard relational database querying to find children categories of any given category by querying for all category nodes whose parent is a given category.

11. The method of Claim 10, further comprising the step of:

25 finding all URLs for a given category by querying for all URLs associated with said category.

12. The method of Claim 5, further comprising the step of:

providing an interactive user interface that allows users to navigate among categories corresponding to URLs that have been previously visited while browsing.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein said interactive user interface does not include
5 categories that correspond to pages a user has never visited.

14. The method of Claim 12, wherein said user interface for a hierarchy of data can be displayed as either of a tree list and a series of Web-style pages.

10 15. The method of Claim 12, wherein said user interface allows users to re-find Web sites by drilling down through familiar categories.

16. The method of Claim 12, wherein said user interface allows users to discover groups of previously visited pages which happen to fall into a same category.

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17. The method of Claim 12, wherein from any given category display, said user interface supplies a link back to a full Web page for that category; wherein within a same user interface, a user can focus on previously visited pages and then navigate to a wider view of similar pages that might be worth exploring.

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18. The method of Claim 5, wherein said database comprises the Open Directory Project.

19. The method of Claim 18, wherein said database exposes a Web interface, and
25 allows navigating through categories to find Web sites.

20. The method of Claim 5, further comprising the step of:

providing a plurality of Web browsing tools that display metadata and that allow capturing an image or Web page;

wherein said tools comprise any of Save Page and Stop Watching; and

5 wherein said metadata comprise any of Rating, Comments, Snapshots, and Categories.

21. The method of Claim 20, further comprising the step of:

storing captured Web pages as part of a media library;

10 wherein a captured Web page may be viewed and searched even if an original page is changed or becomes unavailable.

22. The method of Claim 20, further comprising the step of:

15 viewing Web pages that have either been captured locally or that are part of a browsing history as any of a passively personalized Web favorites list and in a time-based history view.

23. An apparatus for establishing and maintaining a categorized Web browsing history, comprising:

20 a directory service for providing category metadata about user visited URLs; and

means for using metadata thus obtained to present a user's personal browser history in a category based hierarchy.

25 24. The apparatus of Claim 23, wherein said directory service comprises the Open Directory Project.

25. The method of Claim 23, wherein said directory service comprises a database, that exposes a Web interface, and that allows navigating through categories to find Web sites.

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26. The apparatus of Claim 25, wherein said categories are structured as trees, where each node of a tree has zero or one parents and zero or many children.

27. A storage medium comprising at least one storage element on which is stored a program for establishing and maintaining a categorized Web browsing history, said
10 program comprising a method performing the steps of:

performing a reverse lookup in a database to find a chain of categories for a URL, every time a URL that has not been previously seen is added to a history; and
for URLs for which there is no category in said database, iteratively retrying
15 said reverse lookup using a less specific part of said URL until a category is found;

28. The storage medium of Claim 27, said program further comprising a method performing the step of:

using standard relational database technology to store and query a local
20 representation of said categories.

29. The storage medium of Claim 28, said program further comprising a method performing the step of:

using a row in a first database table for each category node, wherein each
25 row has a parent field to represent a node in a category chain.

30. The storage medium of Claim 29, said program further comprising a method performing the step of:

using a second database table to store a relationship between each URL and its one specific category node.

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31. The storage medium of Claim 30, said program further comprising a method performing the steps of:

given a category path, adding rows for any nodes that are not already in said local database; and

10 setting parent links appropriately.

32. The storage medium of Claim 31, said program further comprising a method performing the step of:

15 using standard relational database querying to find children categories of any given category by querying for all category nodes whose parent is a given category.

33. The storage medium of Claim 32, said program further comprising a method performing the step of:

20 finding all URLs for a given category by querying for all URLs associated with said category.

34. The storage medium of Claim 27, said program further comprising a method performing the step of:

25 providing an interactive user interface that allows users to navigate among categories corresponding to URLs that have been previously visited while browsing.

35. The storage medium of Claim 34, wherein said interactive user interface does not include categories that correspond to pages a user has never visited.

36. The storage medium of Claim 34, wherein said user interface for a hierarchy of data can is displayed as either of a tree list and a series of Web-style pages.

37. The storage medium of Claim 34, wherein said user interface allows users to re-find Web sites by drilling down through familiar categories.

38. The storage medium of Claim 34, wherein said user interface allows users to discover groups of previously visited pages which happen to fall into a same category.

39. The storage medium of Claim 34, wherein from any given category display, said user interface supplies a link back to a full Web page for that category; wherein within a same user interface, a user can focus on previously visited pages and then navigate to a wider view of similar pages that might be worth exploring.

40. The storage medium of Claim 27, wherein said database comprises the Open Directory Project.

41. The storage medium of Claim 40, wherein said database exposes a Web interface, and allows navigating through categories to find Web sites.

42. The storage medium of Claim 27, said program further comprising a method performing the step of:

providing a plurality of Web browsing tools that display metadata and that allow capturing an image or Web page;

wherein said tools comprise any of Save Page and Stop Watching; and

wherein said metadata comprise any of Rating, Comments, Snapshots, and

5 Categories.

43. The storage medium of Claim 42, said program further comprising a method performing the step of:

storing captured Web pages as part of a media library;

10 wherein a captured Web page may be viewed and searched even if an original page is changed or becomes unavailable.

44. The storage medium of Claim 42, said program further comprising a method performing the step of:

15 viewing Web pages that have either been captured locally or that are part of a browsing history as any of a passively personalized Web favorites list and in a time-based history view.